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COMMENCEMENT ADDRESSES

JUNE 8, 1919

BY

SOL. M. STROOCK, ESQ.

PROFESSOR LOUIS GINZBERG

PROFESSOR MORDECAI M. KAPLAN



NEW YORK
THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA
1919

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Holding fast, however, does not mean standing still. Without being in sympathy with rapid changes and feverish activities of a restless age, one must admit that any institution which tries to remain stationary in a moving world stands at a very great disadvantage. In modern times our tastes, our habits, our intellectual atmosphere have so greatly altered, that it would be suicidal policy for the Synagogue to ignore the great changes. It is your mission, you graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary, to restate the Jewish message, that it can be understood by the modern man. Yours is a new way to teach old truths, to show the new depth of meaning in the old forms. Fetters on the mind are as fatal to life and movement as fetters on the limbs. Truth has nothing to fear from free inquiry, and though criticism destroys much, it creates more; if it cuts away some ground, it refills the chasm with more stable foundations. But where there is no love there is no understanding, and for criticism to be constructive sympathy is the first requirement. Judaism, if it wants to live, must take up and assimilate new ideas, yet it must retain a continuity with the past out of which it has sprung. Modern times have witnessed movements among us which break the spiritual continuity of Israel which snap the threat of our priceless heritage—the Jewish consciousness which is a blending of its own kind and must not be dissolved in its separate ingredients. These

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movements do not telescope into the next stage, they leave a gap; they do not develop; they jump. Only through the Synagogue Judaism can grow, here is the line of life, here is organic process, here is what the past enfolded, here lies evolutionary expectation. "In what we improve we are never wholly new, in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete."

Proudhon, somewhere remarks, that if you go very deeply into politics you are sure to get into theology. Lesser minds than this great Frenchman turned his saying upside down to make it read, "If you go into theology, make sure you get into politics." I have no inclination to follow this advice and there is no danger that I should encumber you with an additional peace talk. But addressing students of Jewish theology, one cannot help dwelling for a moment on the fact that the victory which God in His mercy has granted to our beloved country is at the same time a victory for the Jewish ideal of righteousness and justice. "Great is justice," say the Rabbis, "because it leads to peace." The victory will be complete when the peace will bring justice to all—even to the Jew.

An old Jewish saying is, "Keep good things for the end." I shall act accordingly and now read to you a letter which I received a few days ago from Doctor Adler, the Acting-President of the Seminary. Doctor Adler, who in response to the call of duty has gone overseas, sends his sincerest greetings to the

awaken an echo in the masses, which shows that the ideas have been slumbering unconsciously in the souls of the many. Today you receive the title of Rabbi, which means master, but only he can claim mastery over others who is master of himself and only he is master in Israel who masters the best there is in Israel.

Things that are near assume disproportionate importance, and I hesitate to speak of the crisis through which we are now passing as the most dangerous one in the history of our people. But the seriousness of the situation will be denied by none. The development of history brings not only little disarrangements but also great transformations. Often the movements of spiritual life are gradual. They resemble, as it has been aptly put, the slow rise or fall of ancient coast lines, where by imperceptible degrees, sea turns into land and land into sea. So without shock or clamor, man smoothly modifies his point of view. But there occurs in the spiritual world the analogue of the earthquake, the lava flood and the tidal wave which shatter mountains and sweep cities to destruction. Man's outlook on the universe suffers sudden revolution, the obvious becomes incredible, the incredible obvious; whole societies lose their balance and stately systems are tumbled in the dust. With the Lord, the Psalmist sings, a thousand years are but as yesterday, but it is also true that sometimes with the Lord one day

is a thousand years. And in times like these my advice to you is, "Hold fast!" Hold fast to your calling. Do not turn the Synagogue into a lecture hall. Intellectual somersaults may and very likely will bring you personal advantages, but they will destroy the Synagogue.

Hold fast to your faith in God. If you are tossed about by every wind of religious thought, you bring only perplexity and doubt into the minds of those who hear you. The chief religious need of our time is leadership—we are so much influenced by current opinion that men who can stand up for unpopular truth are rare. You are not private individuals but messengers of the Lord, entrusted with His truth and commissioned to utter it, whether man will bear or forbear. Knowledge alone will not do. What you know you must utter with conviction, remembering that the fate of men depends upon you and that their souls will be required at your hands.

And lastly, hold fast to your faith in Israel. It may flatter your vanity to be looked upon as a representative Jew by the world outside, but your first and foremost duty is to present Judaism to the Jew. Your faith in Israel must be strong enough to raise you above the narrow confines of partisanship. You must not say, "He who is not for me is against me," but say "Who is not against me is for me." You are graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Jewish without any tag attached to it.

towards the ennoblement of human relationships, but it does this only as a side issue and as a consequence, not as a set purpose, nor as its principal task. It is only the modern expression of paganism to set God up as a departmental Deity—even were this department the whole province of ethics. Our old dogma, "The Lord our God is one" is not yet antiquated; we still believe that our God sustains the full circle of human interests, life in all its manifestations.

You notice I am again using such old-fashioned expressions as belief, faith and dogma, which according to the exponents of advanced views have no *raison d'être* in our age of reason. But the most unreasonable people in the world are those who depend solely on reason; all initial assumptions, the dynamic functions of our soul are based upon faith and not logic. A creed of some kind, religious or irreligious, is a vital necessity for all, not a speculative luxury for the few. It is true religion is one thing and theology another, but religion is never found apart from theology of some kind, for theology is the articulation of religious experience. Every man has as much theology as he can hold, or in other words, every man who has anything worthy to be called a religious experience has also a theology—he cannot help it! The dogma of a dogmaless Judaism could only arise in the minds of those for whom Judaism ceased to be a living organism. Dogma,

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a deep thinker of modern times remarks, is a phenomenon of social life of a religion, as language and concepts are part and parcel of the social life of man. One has not his backbone in front of him, but he must have a backbone and a straight one, or he will be humpbacked. It may sound modest and at the same time intellectual to describe oneself merely as a searcher for truth and not a teacher of truth, but who will search if there is no truth to be found? Entire intellectual toleration is the mark of those who believe nothing. Unless some things are settled in your minds, you had better not preach and teach Judaism at all. Judaism is not, to quote the words of our lamented Doctor Schechter, a Jack-of-all Trades, meaning anything to anybody, from agnosticism to mysticism and from a Torahless nationalism to a Torahless universalism. If you are to hold to the God of the Bible, you must also hold to the Bible of God, and if you are to hold to Israel, the people of God, you must also hold to the God of the people of Israel.

After reading the Decalogue and the Shema, the manual mentioned before informs us the priests recited the morning prayers in unison with the people. To read the Torah to the people and then pray with them in unison is your calling. Progress is of small account unless it touches the many, yet great ideas never come from the masses but from marked individuals. These ideas, when propounded, however,

ADDRESS

BY PROFESSOR LOUIS GINSBERG

I have been meditating what I might say to you at the hour of parting, when the close associations of many a year are broken and you leave the narrow space of the classroom—the four ells of the Halakah—to take up your life work in the wide world. Last words ought to be lasting words, memorable ones, or in the language of our sages, “One should not depart from a friend, without imparting to him some form of conduct—‘a Debar Halakah’—by which he will be remembered.”

The few remarks I am about to make to you suggested themselves to me by the study of an ancient manual, composed towards the end of the second Jewish Commonwealth and later incorporated in the Mishnah. A passage in this manual dealing with the order of prayer in the temple reads as follows: “At the bidding of the temple officer, the priests first pronounced the benediction over the Torah and then read from it the Decalogue and the Shema.” Today when you, like the priests of old, enter the service of God, I have no better advice to give you than to say to you, “Follow in the footsteps of the holy priests. Praise God for his boundless love in bestowing upon Israel the Torah, be mindful of His commandments and steadfast in your faith.” Your mission is to teach Jewish life and, as physical life

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involves the unity and cooperation of all the organs of the body, so Jewish life involves the united working of all the powers of the soul, intellect, affection and will. Nourish Jewish intellect with the Torah, exercise Jewish affection in the fulfillment of the divine commandments and have Jewish will centered in faith.

I am fully aware that my advice to you sounds rather old-fashioned and shows no trace of advanced views. But this "advancement" very often consists only in holding views which have the air of novelty, which make some stir, which are either sufficiently plausible to deceive the simple or sufficiently un-plausible to attract the over-refined. When deprived of their glittering tinsel these "advanced" views turn out to be antiquated notions which have long been discarded. If modern philosophy has taught us anything, it is certainly the independence of religion from culture, or to use a less ominous word, from civilization. These "advanced thinkers" among us who would reduce Jewish religion to a means, however essential, clearly show that they have as little kept abreast with the development of modern philosophic thought as they have penetrated into the spirit of history. They not only would weaken the force of religion, but endanger its truth. For it is essential to religion to reveal, with the relationship to God, a new life incomparably superior to all human aims. This life may well work, nay must work,

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every race and of every creed and of every condition will realize that the Lord moves in a mysterious way. His wonders to perform.

In closing, I have an announcement to make which has brought to me genuine pleasure. I am in receipt of a letter from the members of the graduating class of this year, which I will now read to you.

SOL. M. STROOCK, Esq.,
Honorary Secretary, Board of Directors,
The Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Dear Sir:

The members of the Graduating Class have requested me to inform you that they have decided to give a gift to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. This gift, of about fifty dollars, is to be used to purchase books, under the direction of the Librarian and the Professor of Homiletics, on the sociological and psychological aspects of the religious problems of the day.

This is the first instance of a Graduating Class presenting a memorial to the Seminary, and it is our hope and expectation that future Graduating Classes will follow our example.

We would suggest that our gift be known as "The Class of 1919 Gift for the Purchase of Books on Religious Problems of the Day."

Respectfully yours,
HARRY COHEN.

I have not been able officially to present this to my colleagues on the Board of Directors, but I have no hesitancy in saying that they will with great

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delight accept this gift in the spirit in which it is offered, and in their name, therefore, I express to the members of the graduating class the hearty appreciation of the Board of Directors.

Judaism, pursued it through all its course and is still finding its abettors among us, working for their own destruction. Lord, forgive them, for they know nothing. Those who are entrusted with carrying out the purpose of this institution, which, as you have seen, aims at the perpetuation of the tenets of the Jewish religion, both pupils and masters, must faithfully and manfully maintain their loyalty to the Torah. There is no other Jewish religion but that taught by the Torah and confirmed by history and tradition, and sunk into the conscience of Catholic Israel."

The people of the Law are law loving and law abiding. To them lawlessness is an unforgivable and inexcusable crime. Destruction of the law is the destruction of the Torah, and destruction of the Torah is the death of Israel and the quenching of the Light of the world. The fact that a few impudent apostates have sought to cast off what they have chosen to regard as the *yoke* of the Law, and have led or assisted or participated in leading some part of the Bolshevik movement, proves only that, because of their ignorance, they have departed from the Law, because of their arrogance they have cut themselves off from the House of Israel, and they have worked and are working for their own destruction. Israel, the protector of the Law, ever upholding the banner of the Torah, ever carrying the torch of righteousness and of truth and of civilization on high, cannot be de-

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stroyed by them so long as there remains among us that remnant of Israel who gloriously rally around our Law and seek to spread its truth and its blessings among all the nations of the earth. In the words of our great master let us say, "Lord forgive them, for they know nothing."

Let us all, therefore, Faculty, rabbis, students and friends of this Seminary, as we meet here to-day, highly resolve to cling to our Torah, to study it diligently, so that we may ourselves comprehend it and in turn spread its light and its truth among our fellow men. Let us preserve this great heritage. Let us make ourselves worthy of our heroic ancestry, and as citizens of this great country, inspired by its ideals, and enlightened and encouraged by the learning and the wisdom of our own great sages and masters, prove by our love and unchangeable regard for law and order that Bolshevism and Judaism are direct antitheses; that our mission is not to destroy, but to upbuild; that we seek to live in peace and harmony and not at war with our fellow men. Then and then only shall we have proven ourselves worthy of our priceless birthright; then and then only will we be able to transmit to our children unsullied this birthright of the Law, our Torah; then and then only will we be able to demonstrate that Israel's mission now, as it always has been,—is peace. Through us the world will have been made a better place in which to live and in which to serve, and men of

bolical assertions are wholly untrue and are but a continuance of the specious excuses which have been trumped up time and time again. But in attempting to answer our question, "Watchman, what of the night?" it is not sufficient for us to produce and to bring forth testimony to the falsity of these accusations, for our enemies are only too willing and unfortunately they have been able, to produce upon the other side, testimony, perjured though it may be, in an attempt to justify them in their terrorism and to form some plausible foundation upon which their malice may find a resting place. We must by our own lives, by our own conduct, by our actions with our fellow men, by our relations with each other and by our attitude toward our Heavenly Father, demonstrate beyond peradventure that a people such as we, with a history of which the world is proud, with traditions of unswerving righteousness and of unerring justice, cannot possibly be Anarchists and cannot conceivably be either leaders or followers of any Bolshevist or similar movement. Our Torah—the Law which Moses commanded us—is the inheritance of the Congregation of Jacob. That Law is to us a tree of life, upon which we have safely laid hold and by which we stand to-day as always. For that Law, for its development, for its spread, this institution has from its foundation stood, and for that Law, God willing, we shall continue to stand,—to fight for, and if need be, to die for.

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For that Law and for its protection, the members of our Faculty have pledged their lives and our students must fearlessly do likewise. For that Law, we of the laity must stand ready to pledge our fortunes, by contributing liberally to the support and maintenance of this Institution of Learning and its affiliated bodies constituting the United Synagogue of America. For that Law, all of us, old and young, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, must pledge our sacred honor.

We cannot too often refer to the words of our great master, our sainted and never-to-be-forgotten President, Professor Schechter. He pointed out in his inaugural address as President, and in season and out of season during his whole life in clarion tones he taught us, "this Torah is the great entail of the Children of Israel. It has become an integral and inalienable part of ourselves, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. We must make an end to these constant amputations if we do not wish to see the body of Israel bled to death before our very eyes. We must leave off talking about Occidentalizing our religion—as if the Occident has ever shown the least genius for religion—or freeing the conscience by abolishing various laws. These and similar platitudes and stock phrases borrowed from Christian apologetics, must be abandoned entirely if we do not want to drift slowly but surely into Paulinism, which entered the world as the deadliest enemy of

iquity, hostilities have ceased, and peace is almost at hand. The night of despair seems to have passed and as we stand upon the threshold of the dawn of what we all hope and pray may be a better day,—the day of peace, of justice, of righteousness, of mutual toleration and forbearance, we may well ask, as did our fathers of old, “Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?”

Following the upheaval and the cataclysm of the great war, we find a tremendous movement spreading over the lands of devastated Europe and threatening even this beloved land of ours, this haven of refuge for the persecuted and downtrodden of all lands. What name we give to this movement is not material—whether we call it Anarchy, Bolshevism or Nihilism, the movement is there, and we see it with all its terrors and we stand aghast at the prospect. Led by fanatics and bigots, inflamed by the monster,—hunger,—no longer merely a spectre, but a dreadful reality, thousands of people have been drawn into this movement, ravaging and destroying and threatening to tear down the pillars of civilization. Their leaders have just little enough of that learning which we have been taught to recognize and to regard as a most dangerous thing. Half-baked and ill-considered ideas and theories have led them in their desire to be unconventional, in their desire to destroy the conventions of society, to be the most conventional of men.

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There is a kind of conventionality in unconventionality—a seeming paradox, but, nevertheless, a dreadful reality. In their desire to be regarded as anti-bigots, their deeds stamp them the most awful of bigots. Whatever stands in their path as they pursue their wild and reckless course of bigotry, intolerance and hatred, they uproot and destroy, even those things which we regard as most sacred and holy.

By their conduct, they remind us of the ancient tale of Diogenes and Plato. Diogenes having conceived a hatred of Plato because he regarded the manner of Plato's living as unwarrantably luxurious and extravagant, walked into the mud, covered his boots with slime and then rushed into Plato's apartment, trampling the mud upon the costly rugs and draperies of the apartment, exclaiming, "Thus do I trample on thy pride, O Plato!" "Yes, but with even greater pride," answered Plato. I mention this Anarchistic or Bolshevistic movement at this time and upon this occasion because of the charges which have been made by our enemies, notably in Poland, that not only the leaders but the great body of the Bolsheviks are Jews, and that the Pogroms in that country which have again caused the entire civilized world to shudder and to despair have been directed not against the Jews but against the Bolsheviks, who they say, are Jews. We know, and the world knows, that these malignant charges and these dia-

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESSES

JUNE 8, 1919

ADDRESS

By SOL. M. STROOCK, Esq.

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY, STUDENTS AND FRIENDS:

I consider it a distinguished honor to have the privilege upon this, the occasion of our annual commencement, to extend to you, on behalf of the Board of Directors of this Seminary, our cordial greetings and to bid you a most hearty welcome.

We have been taught that "where two or three are gathered together in My name, I will be among them." We are indeed gathered here to-day in the name of the Lord, and this assemblage surely constitutes at this time the House of our God. In all reverence, therefore, and with due humility, may I not say to you as I greet you to-day, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord; we bless you out of the House of the Lord."

The privilege of greeting you has fallen to me because of the absence of Mr. Louis Marshall, the chairman of our Board of Directors, who, as you know, is at present in Paris, championing the rights of our people, who have been oppressed and who even to-day are suffering death and agony at the hands of tyrannical mobs in Poland, and in other

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lands of Eastern Europe. We are proud to feel that the influence of our Seminary, in the person of the chairman of our Board of Directors, who is ably assisted in his heroic and self-sacrificing task by Doctor Cyrus Adler, the Acting-President of our Seminary, has thus been extended beyond the confines of our own country, and that the appeal for justice and right has been made and is being made by our own beloved leaders, not for themselves, not for ourselves, but for the glory of God and for the cause of His oppressed children. I ask you, therefore, at this time to permit me to send in your name and in the names of the faculty and students of this Seminary, a cable message of greeting to these, our champions, so that they may know and be assured that our thoughts are constantly with them and that we thoroughly appreciate their untiring efforts. The cable which I propose to send is as follows:

Louis Marshall, Hotel Continental, Paris:

The Faculty, Rabbis, and Students of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, assembled at the commencement exercises, send you and Doctor Adler heartiest greetings and pray that your efforts in the cause of God and Israel may be blessed with success.

When last we met at our annual commencement, hideous war, with all of its unspeakable horrors, had spread over the earth, and the soil of many lands was drenched with the blood of our fellow men. Now, right has triumphed over the hosts of in-

the stars of the firmament."

Rabbis and Teachers:—Our prayers and our blessings go with you, as you take up the task of learning and imparting the wisdom of Israel, that wisdom of which it is said: "It is a tree of life to them that take hold thereof, and happy is everyone that holdeth it fast. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths lead to peace."

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CONFERRING OF HONORARY DEGREE UPON CHIEF RABBI HERTZ

BY PROFESSOR LOUIS GINZBERG

One of the greatest metaphysicians of the last century has the following entry in his diary: "I never celebrated the birthday of my son, but I did celebrate the day upon which he for the first time uttered the word 'I'." There are to-day very likely not many who are ready to accept a philosophy which centers in the ego, yet there is a good deal of truth in this statement of Fichte that our life begins at the moment when we become conscious of ourselves.

Similarly one may say that the birth of an educational institution ought to be dated from the time when it becomes conscious of its life as expressed in the work of its graduates. Hence this year marks an epoch in the life of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. The first graduate of the Seminary, Doctor Joseph H. Hertz, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of Great Britain, completes this year the first quarter of a century of his Rabbinate. Doctor Hertz, a loyal son of Israel, a devoted son of the God of Israel, and a self-sacrificing worker in the vineyard of Israel, has endeared himself to the Jewries of three continents, to the Jews of America where he first displayed his rare gifts as Rabbi and leader, to the Jews of South

istence nearly ten years. It has graduated for the last seven years on the average of fifteen to twenty teachers a year. Its graduates are to be found in the most important religious schools of the city, and among them are many who have made Jewish education their life work. Its standard of requirements has advanced from year to year. Whatever promise there is of a future to Jewish education, from the standpoint of teachers, at present resides primarily in the Teachers Institute. With all that, how many are there who take an interest in it? How many are there who contribute to its support? How many are there who even know of its existence? It is true the Teachers Institute has made no noise, because it has been busy doing work. The Jews, however, who are really in earnest about their Judaism should by this time have discovered the Teachers Institute and have come forward to its assistance.

To you, graduates of the Teachers Institute, I wish to say that though your work as Jewish teachers will be more limited in scope than that of the graduates of the Seminary, it is no less sacred and significant for the future of our people. You and many more like you are needed to imbue the Jewish generation of to-morrow with a Jewish consciousness. It is necessary, therefore, that you too enter upon your work with a feeling of special consecration. You have no right to take charge of a class in any of our religious schools if your aim be simply to earn some

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money wherewith to prepare yourselves for some more lucrative calling. The greatest curse to Judaism is the uninspired pedagogue, as the greatest blessing is the teacher who comes to his work with a fervent soul. You have no right to enter the sanctuary of the child's heart unless Israel's will to live functions in you as an irresistible compulsion to win the young for Judaism, to open their eyes to its truths, to train, as it were, their budding lives to bask in the sunlight of our people's hopes and ideals.

See to it that you transmit to the child not merely information on Jewish subjects but the very soul of the Jewish people. Present the Jewish people to him, not as a mere abstraction, but as a living reality. Let not Israel's past be to the child a mere memory of a people that was. Let not Israel's sacred literature be made to appear to him like the dried up bed of an ancient river, but let him feel the impact of the living water of spiritual life coursing through each word of Jewish lore. Train the child to participate in the life and activity of the Jewish people. Make him responsive to the call of Jewish duty. Cultivate in him purity of thought and of action. Furnish him with dreams and hopes and yearnings by which his higher life might be quickened and enlarged. Meagre as your material reward may be, your spiritual reward, to use a thought of our Sages, can be expressed only in the words of Daniel, "They that shall cause others to understand shall shine as

daism than has yet been formulated, and toward a more virile and positive line of action than has as yet been attempted.

To enter the maze of perplexities, doubts and questionings may be as dangerous now as it was in the days of Rabbi Akiba, who was the only one out of four great Tanaim to come out spiritually unscathed from the intricacies of speculative philosophy. But it is infinitely more urgent to render doubts and questionings safe for Judaism of the twentieth century than it was to render speculative philosophy for the Judaism of the second century. Rabbi Akiba's formula for a successful adventure of that kind always holds good. "It all depends upon the kind of life you lead."

So far I have stated what the true conception of the rabbinic function implies for the Rabbi. But that conception has its implications also for the community. If the community really wants spiritual teachers it must be willing to be taught and not merely entertained by a few half-hour sermons a year. It must be, so to speak, forever at school. It must believe above all in Jewish education, in a regular systematic and continuous schooling for the young. You cannot transmit a three thousand year civilization by means of a few Bible stories, illustrated by stereopticon views. The work of transmission consists of the teaching of a language, a history, a literature and a philosophy. It means the slow and grad-

ual development of a proper mental background in the rank and file of the Jewish people.

That cannot be accomplished by graduating half a dozen or dozen Rabbis a year. For that we need thousands of teachers, who, in addition to possessing the knowledge and pedagogy of the average school teacher, shall be imbued with the Jewish spirit and possess a wide Jewish culture. Such teachers have to be trained. The type of teacher whose main qualification was that he was good for nothing else is no longer wanted. An institution like the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary ought to be in a position to graduate at least one hundred teachers a year. Anyone who is in touch with the Jewish educational situation knows that we are actually confronting a spiritual crisis because of the shortage in teachers. Immigration being at a standstill and lucrative callings having recently attracted many of those that had been engaged in teaching, dozens of Jewish schools are demoralized and no new schools can be established. What is New York Jewry doing to meet that crisis? It is spending at the present time for the training of religious teachers for its 300,000 children as much money as it costs to maintain two automobiles.

Is it not high time that the Jewish community bestir itself out of its fatal lethargy, and make provision for the future of Judaism in this country? We have a Teachers Institute which has now been in ex-

mouth only if he acts as the messenger of the Lord of hosts." By that remark they meant to point out the need of self-effacement, if one wants to qualify as a spiritual teacher, for the "Malakh" is a being who has no individual or personal will. The will and purpose of God are his will and purpose.

In planning and executing your work you will, no doubt, find it difficult to eliminate the personal equation. The temptation to be in the limelight will afford you sufficient occasion for combating the intrusion of self. That temptation is all the greater because most people judge a Rabbi's worth and ability by the amount of space he gets in the general press. Those of you who will go to smaller communities, where you are not likely to be of the Rabbis who represent the classes, nor of those who represent the masses, are liable to be very unhappy, if your chief ambition will be to shine at public functions and mass meetings, as your opportunities to do so will be rather limited.

Piety and saintliness, which are taught by example rather than by precept, do not go together with a "penchant" for self-advertising. In fact, the characteristic lack of team spirit among Rabbis is also due to their inability to sink their individualities, which are over-accentuated from the moment they begin to train themselves for their calling. But what have you to do with humanizing others, with teaching others to subordinate their personal interests to the

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larger life of which they are a part, if you cannot first humanize yourselves, and become the messengers of the Lord of hosts?

A second requisite in your work as spiritual teachers is intellectual honesty. The constant manipulation of ideas and truths is apt to foster a knack for intellectual jugglery. The cardinal sin of the mind is sophistry. The sophists have always maintained that if you take up the profession of teaching, it makes no difference what you believe, so long as you have the art of expressing what you are expected to believe. Convictions, according to them, are held only by old women and young children. This cynical contempt for ideas is a detestable heresy that no amount of book-learning can atone for. The spiritual teacher, who has no point of view of his own, and is ready to give lazy acquiescence to half-formed ideas and fragmentary beliefs held by the laity on matters social and religious, is a traitor to his cause.

The religious philosophy of a positive and dynamic Judaism is still in the process of formation. President Schechter, in speaking of the theology of the Historical School of Judaism in his own day, said, "I neither hope nor believe that it will do for those who come after us." That theology is already in need of further development and application. I trust, therefore, that you will not shirk the duty of contributing toward a clearer point of view in Ju-

vate a sense of humanity. These were taught as scintillations of individual genius, to afford the few privileged ones the opportunity of asserting their intellectual superiority over the rest of mankind. We know now why physical science has proved inadequate for humanizing purposes. It fits the individual in his struggle for existence, but it does nothing to prevent him from conceiving existence as a struggle of individuals. The sense of humanity can come only from the spirit of history, of history not as a dry catalogue of names and dates, but of history that gives one a feeling of social continuity and identity with the inner life of the race. The history which will emancipate the human being from the narrow, selfish individualism that he has in common with the sub-human creatures is not the finished record of fact that you find in books, but is an inexhaustible and ever-growing revelation of God in human life. It is probably this conception of history that a recent writer had in mind when he spoke of "salvation by history."

But can you conceive of the scheme of salvation by history without giving to Israel's history a central place in that scheme? Mankind to-day is no less in need of the civilizing and humanizing influences of Israel's past than it was nineteen hundred years ago, when it blunderingly tried to incorporate into its own life the experiences of Israel, without really comprehending what those experiences implied. Now is

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your opportunity. It is for you to make the Jewish past vital with new and spiritual meaning, and to clear it of the ignorance and misunderstandings that have rendered it ineffectual. It is for you to bring back to life the waning powers of the soul of Israel, and by means of those powers to give a new impetus to the work of humanization which must be begun anew.

This does not mean that you must be merely custodians of the past. You are not to be curators of a museum stored with antiquities. The past can become creative only by finding application in the present. Judaism, like every other historic religion, is on trial to-day. It is doomed if it means to deal only in vague platitudes and denatured generalizations. Truths, to be worth anything, must point and lead to action. If Judaism is to play a part in the world it must grapple boldly with the problems that are at the basis of the great unrest, and do its share toward bringing peace and security to the world. With the sea of life storm-riven as it is to-day, Judaism will have to do much more than merely spurt upon it a thin stream of unctuous persiflage.

For a task such as you undertake you must possess unusual qualities of mind and heart. The prophet Malachi said, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and men should seek law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts;" to which our Rabbis add, "Men will seek law at his

teach. Do not set yourselves up as social workers, orators or latter-day prophets, nor aspire to be "darlings of the gods and the ladies." Whether you are called Rabbis, preachers, ministers, or doctors, teaching is your main function. You do not, of course, belong to those who teach others how to make a living. Your place is with those who teach others what to live for and how to live. You belong to those who constitute the main civilizing agency in the world, if by civilization we understand whatever makes for peace instead of war. "The disciples of the wise," say our sages, "increase peace throughout the world: as it is said, 'And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.' Read not *banayich*, thy children, but *bonayich*, thy builders."

The great slogan of these days is "Reconstruction." Reconstruct what? The social and intellectual chaos of pre-war times that was camouflaged by a few conventional decencies? What we need is to construct, not reconstruct. We have hardly begun to build a world in which mankind aspires to dwell, a world founded on justice, reason and peace. How shall such a world be built up? Surely not by means of wars and revolutions. Earthquakes have never been known to build cities. Wars, whether they be of nation against nation or class against class, brutalize both victor and vanquished. They awaken the beast in man. Dilating upon the spir-

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itual effects of the Great War has gone out of fashion. The world-wide turmoil and unrest, the recent tide of anti-Semitism, and the wholesale massacres of our people in Eastern Europe demonstrate the hollowness of the grandiose pretensions that filled the air the last few years. Never was the human heart so agitated as it is to-day by the bestial passions of fear, hatred and revenge. Such is the aftermath of war.

The newer and better world for which we long will come into being only through the slow process of education. But it must not be the education to which we have hitherto been accustomed, an education that rendered merely lip service to the ideals of peace. It takes a world of effort and ingenuity to drill men in the art of tearing out each other's entrails. It ought to take at least the same amount of effort and ingenuity to get men to see into each other's minds.

The new education that will train men for peace, as the old did for war, will have to break down the walls of the ego. The most fatal illusion from which man suffers is that he can be human by himself alone. It is that illusion which will have to be dispelled through the cultivation of a socialized sympathetic imagination. The new education will strive at making men human by making them conscious participants in the undying life of humanity. We know now why the humanities failed to culti-

be congratulated upon the spiritual adventure that lies before you. The range of interests, to which you can bring the best that is in you, is unlimited. What task can be more absorbing than that of moulding human nature, and shaping men's thoughts and aspirations? But, at the same time, you should be made to realize that being a Rabbi is not a pink tea affair. I am not alluding to the amount of work that a Rabbi has to do, to the patience that he must exercise, to the tact that he must display, or to the criticisms and vexations that he must be prepared to encounter. I have in mind, rather, the inner struggle you will have to go through in fighting off the haunting incubus of a sense of superfluity. You may have to minister to people who will give you to understand that they could get along well enough without you. Particularly, if the congregation happens to be of the good old type, the committee that will negotiate with you will be at pains to convince you, that as far as the older men and women are concerned, they do not need any Rabbi. They are good enough Jews already.

That the very function of the Rabbi should be called into question is primarily due to the social changes which have taken place in Jewish life. The Rabbi no longer has occasion to act as judge or arbiter in disputes over monetary affairs. Matters of ritual outside of the Synagogue play so insignificant a role that the Rabbi is seldom consulted with regard to

them. Even the wearing of the episcopal vest will not endow the Rabbi with the functions of administering the kind of soul salvation which is expected from the Christian priest. Under these circumstances the Rabbi tends to become a sort of social factotum. His principal work is, of course, to be master of ceremonies at the Synagogue services, which important people never think of visiting more than once or twice a year, and perhaps somewhat more frequently during the year of mourning. But there are now and then all kinds of "drives" in which the Rabbi can make himself useful. There are state occasions when he may deliver congratulatory addresses; there are social and philanthropic organizations on whose boards he may serve as a member; there are, furthermore, marrying and burying to be done. Nor is the value of the occasional visit to people's households to be despised. Divines are as necessary to congregations as flunkies to tallyhos.

Being regarded as a supernumerary is not pleasant thought for any red-blooded person to contemplate, yet, if you have faith in your mission, you will find in the very misapprehension of your calling a challenge to demonstrate your usefulness. This is your very problem, how to get people to believe that what you do is an indispensable asset to the social order and to the life of the community.

If you want to achieve that result you must never lose sight of the fact that your main business is to

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not quite right and representing the main stream of Judaism as it developed in all lands where it was allowed free scope, let our young men with faith in God and loyalty to the Seminary go forth with an invincible spirit to conserve, maintain, and promote Judaism in America.

“I had intended to write only a word and have almost written down a speech. Give my heartiest congratulations to the graduates, my kindest regards to all the members of the Seminary and its friends. And believe me,
Yours faithfully,

CYRUS ADLER.”

And now let me conclude with the last sentence from the temple manual, which reads: “The departing priest greeted those who came to take their places in the Temple with the words, ‘May He who made His name dwell in this House, make brotherhood and love, friendship and peace dwell among you.’”

ADDRESS

BY PROFESSOR MORDECAI M. KAPLAN

The act of conferring authority is, according to our sages, something more than a social convention. The appointment of the seventy elders by Moses, they say, was as significant as the giving of the Law at Sinai, and, like it, was marked by the manifestation of the Divine Presence. It would be a mistake to put these graduation exercises in the same class with those which have become part of the academic routine at this time of the year. This day, when you are authorized to go forth as Rabbis and teachers of Israel, should be deemed sacred. The graduation of Rabbis and teachers, in an age such as ours, is a declaration of faith. It expresses belief in the reality of the spiritual and in the future of Israel. Consecration to a calling that is spiritual in character is tantamount to the revelation of the divine. Self-dedication to the work of creating a future for the Jewish people is equivalent to a renewed acceptance of the Torah on the part of Israel.

We are told that, when Moses was about to appoint the seventy elders, God said to him, "At first make known to them the high privilege to which they are called, but then tell them also of the stubborn and troublesome nature of the people over whom they will have to exercise authority." If we are to adopt a similar course in your case, you should first

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graduating class, and adds a few remarks on the duties of the graduates of the Seminary which are so instructive and sagacious that I cannot help reading them in full to you.

“Paris, France,
May 16, 1919.

“Dear Professor Ginzberg:

“I had hoped to be at home for the Seminary Commencement but this appears now to be impossible. I wish you would convey a word of greeting from me to my colleagues of the Faculty, to the students and especially to those who will this year be receiving their degrees from the Seminary.

“If any word of mine could have weight with the graduates it would be that they should stand fast by traditional Judaism as taught and lived in the Seminary.

“It is natural enough that the great cataclysm through which the world is passing should produce tall talk, loose talk, and every other kind of talk.

“The sickness of the world has been accompanied by a delirium, and the conversation of the delirious patient is not usually considered the soundest philosophy. The height of the fever may have passed but the patient is by no means normal. I dare say we are involved in it more or less. Let me hope for myself at least that I am writing in a lucid interval.

“A great deal has been said about the shifting of spiritual values during this war and much as to a changed attitude toward religion on the part of the men in the army. There have been hints here and there that Judaism must modify itself to meet this change. Tell

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the young Rabbis who are graduating not to believe this. On the contrary young men who had been entirely outside of the influence of Judaism have eagerly sought it, and the lesson for the young Rabbi is that he should give more attention to the young men of his congregation and not be wholly absorbed in the Women's Societies and the Children's School.

"Another fallacy that has sprung up during the course of this war is that there has been developed a non-sectarian religion. Nothing could be further from the truth. There has grown up a fine spirit of comradeship among millions of men who under ordinary circumstances would never have known one another. In hardship and privation, in sickness and in the face of death, these men have stood by each other and the things that separated them vanished for the moment; but only for the moment. Every church is as much possessed of confidence in its own beliefs and practises as ever. It would be comic if it were not so tragic that we Jews should become the only non-sectarians.

"With the largest recognition of the beliefs and practises of others and without separating ourselves from them in any useful or necessary work for the common good, we must continue to proclaim Judaism as an eternal verity to be lived by the Jewish people. We must do this in America especially in view of the unhappy conditions in other lands which though improved legally will still require years for readjustment.

"I firmly believe that no men are in better position to lead a sound Judaism than are the graduates of the Seminary. Standing, as we do, between the extremists who are usually

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Africa where he brought order and light to this new branch of the Diaspora, and to the Jews of Great Britain, whose acknowledged spiritual head he is.

The Board of Directors and the Faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America have therefore decided to bestow upon him the highest distinction in their possession, and herewith confer upon him the Degree of Doctor of Hebrew Literature.

We extend to Doctor Hertz the greeting addressed in olden times to the newly ordained elders:

כל מן דין וכל מן דין סמוכו לנו

This is the man who deserves to be honored.

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